

Theological Schools in Japan.

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The Southern Baptists, whose work lies in the island of Kiushiu, in the Southwestern part of the empire, have withdrawn their patronage from the seminary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, at Yokohama, and have established a theological school of their own in the city of Fukuoka, which is in the midst of their own territory. Their work is almost a thousand miles from Yokohama, so for that and other reasons they prefer to have their own seminary.

The Southern Presbyterians have withdrawn their students from the Union Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Meiji Gakuin, in Tokyo, and have established their own theological school in Kobé. There are doubtless a number of reasons for this important step, but one that I happen to know was that they did not like the "ecclesiastical atmosphere of Tokyo." The Northern Methodists have discontinued their theological work at the Chinzei Gakkwan, in Nagasaki, and are sending their students to our seminary at the Kwansei Gakuin.

Another interesting change is the union of the German missionaries with some of the Congregationalists (Japanese) in a

new theological school in Tokyo. The Congregationalists furnish two of their oldest and most experienced workers to this enterprise, one of whom is perhaps the most brilliant Japanese preacher in the country.



MAIN BUILDING OF THE KWANSEI GAKUIN, KOBE, JAPAN.

The late Mr. Thomas Branch, of Richmond, Va., bequeathed the money to purchase the land on which this school is built.

Still another interesting and important move is the more thorough equipment of the Presbyterian Theological School of Mr. Uemura, in Tokyo. He has erected new buildings and made important additions to his faculty. Mr. Uemura is a remarkably able, vigorous, and aggressive man, who is leading the independent movement in the Presbyterian Church in Japan. His school is an individual enterprise, and stands as the only theological seminary in Japan, so far as I know, that is manned and controlled exclusively by Japanese.

It is a significant fact that the Japanese Churches, with all their impatience of foreign control and their deep-seated and innate desire for independence of action, are still willing to have the missionary take an important part in the training of their leaders. A short time ago one of the most radical of the Christian newspapers, in its ideas as to the further need of missionaries in Japan, granted that there was still an important work for the missionary to do in the training of a Japanese ministry. It is plain that the question of theological education in Japan is not settled. In a single year one seminary has been discontinued, one has been much more thoroughly equipped, and three new ones have been established. And further, both the Japanese Churches and the Foreign Mission Boards are involved in these changes. The fact is, it is the most fundamental question confronting the Churches and the Boards at the present time, and some satisfactory solution must be found.

The most recent and in some respects the most important suggestion that has been made comes from Bishop William Awdry, of the Church of England, who has Episcopal supervision in Japan. Bishop Awdry has evidently considered his proposal very carefully, has outlined a definite plan, and has laid it before some of the professors of Oxford and Cambridge Universities for their consideration. The plan is a taking one. He proposes a "complete divinity professoriate, offering lectures of the highest class, holding examinations, and having power to give certificates ranking with degrees conferred by the universities." "The professoriates," he says, "should include at least five chairs: (1) Essential Christianity—*e. g.*, the Incarnation, Redemption, Membership of Christ; (2) Applied Christianity—the bearing of Christianity on

the lives of men and the problems of the world; (3) The Old Testament (and Hebrew); (4) The New Testament (and Greek); (5) Church History and Development." The institution would be under the patronage of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and the professors, wherever they might come from, would be appointed by the "Divinity Professors of Oxford and Cambridge acting together." He would locate the school in Tokyo, provide for a first-class "Standard Library of English Theology," and make "adequate provision for the translation and publication of theological works." The professors should be men of large experience, wide outlook, and first-rate ability.

This is certainly an attractive scheme, and if realized will probably attract some of the choicest students of divinity in Japan. One serious obstacle in the way of its highest success will occur at once to any one familiar with existing conditions—namely, the fact that this professoriate is to be essentially an English enterprise and will undoubtedly have an English flavor, while a large majority of the missionaries in Japan are Americans; and a large proportion of the Japanese pastors, workers, and members now in Japan would feel more at home with things American than things English. But however this may be, such a proposal must at least commend itself to the consideration of all thoughtful men seeking a real solution of the problem of supplying Japan with a Christian ministry that is thoroughly trained and equipped for religious leadership among so enlightened a people as the Japanese of the present day. In a country where ninety-five per cent of all the boys and ninety per cent of all the girls of school age are actually in school, and where culture of a high order is becoming increasingly common, the Christian preacher must be a

man well furnished for his work if he is to reach the intelligent and influential elements of society.

But, granting all this, it is practically certain that for a good many years to come such an institution as that proposed by Bishop Awdry would be more of the nature of a postgraduate school, where students or pastors who had already had considerable theological training elsewhere or university graduates would go for high-class work, instead of going abroad for it. The average student who had had only an academy course, or even most mere college graduates, would continue to attend with far more profit such theological schools as are now in existence, provided, of course, that these do first-class work of the grade they undertake.

Dr. W. R. Lambuth, our Missionary Secretary, in his article on the "Conversion of Japan to Christianity," in the *Christian Advocate* of October 4, takes essentially this position. He says: "After spending several months in a careful study of missionary conditions and work in Japan, I am satisfied that it is not so much a theological school, ranking with a department of the Imperial University, that is needed. A much wiser investment would be the strengthening in equipment and endowment of the three or four excellent theological seminaries already in existence." I am glad that the two things are not mutually exclusive; but if they were, I should certainly choose the "strengthening in equipment and endowment of the three or four excellent theological seminaries already in existence," and let the other go.

But do not let us forget the "strengthening in equipment and endowment." The work undertaken must be thoroughly well done, or the institutions cannot command the confidence of their

constituencies, and the student supply will fail. And even if this were not so, though it certainly is, if these seminaries are not sufficiently equipped, they cannot turn out such men as are absolutely demanded by existing conditions in Japan. These theological schools that are going to train the large majority of Chris-



BRANCH MEMORIAL CHAPEL.

Erected on the campus of the Kwansei Gakuin, in 1904. This building was made possible by a gift from Mr. John P. Branch, of Richmond, Va.

tian workers here in Japan must be well equipped or they will go under. And they ought to. Institutions, as well as individuals, that fail to do what they are set to do should be removed out of their place. "I come to thee, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place."

We are confronting this question of success or failure in our own theological work at the present time. For many years the Northern Methodists have had their principal theological seminary at Aoyama Gakuin, in Tokyo, while we have had ours at Kwansei Gakuin, in Kobé. When the Methodist Church of Japan was organized, last May, in the city of Tokyo, the publishing interests and the educational work, including the theological, were left entirely in the hands of the interested missions. The young Church was not in a position to bear the responsibility of them. But the fact that theological education was left entirely in the hands of the Mission Boards was an expression of confidence that should be deeply appreciated, and should in no sense be disappointed. Of course the question of whether both the theological schools already in existence for so many years should be continued or whether it would be better to close one and concentrate on the other was thoroughly considered. After canvassing the whole situation, our Northern brethren decided to continue their theological work at Aoyama Gakuin, in which they are being assisted by some of the Canadians, while Bishop Wilson and Dr. Lambuth decided that ours should be continued at Kwansei Gakuin.

Much could truly be said on both sides of the question ; but on account of the great distance of many points from either place as a single center, the increasing Japanese population of Manchuria and Korea, and their geographical relation to the Western Conference, the doubtful expediency of having all Japanese Methodist preachers trained in Tokyo, where the atmosphere is so thoroughly saturated with politics and for other reasons, the decision reached was, perhaps, a wise one ; but only if the matter

of *more thorough equipment is not forgotten*. I am speaking now for our seminary at Kwansei Gakuin. Our faculty must be strengthened by the addition of two more men. We need a thousand dollars for this, and Dr. Lambuth has promised it to us. We need to increase our students' scholarship fund at once to ten thousand dollars. We have five thousand dollars, and need five thousand more. This for present, pressing needs. And, lastly, we need ten thousand dollars for a theological building, its furnishings and equipment. These last two—the five thousand for scholarship fund and the ten thousand for building, etc.—Bishop Wilson and Dr. Lambuth heartily indorse, and will let us have as soon as one or two generous laymen agree with them in this indorsement.

As things now are, our theological students are crowded in with middle school boys into a building that is not large enough for the middle school alone, and they do not mix well. Besides, the Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and the Methodists at Aoyama have excellent theological buildings for the theological work alone. If we expect the patronage of the Western Conference, we had better make no unnecessary delay in providing a suitable building. It will commend us to our constituency.

We are at a critical point in our history, and we had as well recognize it. Every source of weakness must be guarded. Our theological school at Kwansei Gakuin must be thoroughly fitted for the work it is set to do. The best guarantee of success is to be worthy of success.